



[Bipartisan letter to Secretary Sebelius on Conscience Protections.pdf](#)

As many of you know, on January 20, 2012, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius issued a final rule mandating contraceptive and other coverage in the individual and group health insurance markets beginning in 2013. While there is a small religious exemption, its scope is so narrow that it would only apply to places of worship. All other religious affiliated organizations – such as schools, hospitals, and charities – are not protected and will be forced to purchase health insurance plans for their employees that cover contraceptives, sterilizations, and drugs that can act as abortifacients such as Plan B and Ella, even if doing so would go against their deeply held beliefs.

I strongly believe that conscience protections are necessary to ensure that individuals within the health care industry and marketplace are not faced with the decision to violate their deeply held beliefs for fear of breaking federal laws. I sent a bipartisan letter along with 154 of my colleagues to Secretary Sebelius voicing our opposition to this blatant attack on religious liberty. I invite you to read the letter linked above.

I am also a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1179, the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act, authored by my friend, Representative Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska. This bill would amend Obamacare to provide full conscience protections and anti-discrimination protections for health care providers, small businesses, and faith-based health plans. While I believe Obamacare should be repealed in full and have voted to do so, in the absence of full repeal this bill is vital to ensuring full conscience protections for all Americans.

**UPDATE (Monday, Feb. 13):**

After weeks of public outcry, President Obama announced a so-called "compromise" late last Friday on the contraceptive mandate issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. However, the President's new mandate is nothing more than an accounting gimmick and fails to offer adequate protections of the religious liberties enshrined in our Constitution.

I remain deeply disturbed by the Administration's attack on religious freedom. I am committed to working with my colleagues in the House and the Senate to rescind this mandate and ensure that faith-based organizations – as well as all Americans – are guaranteed their rights under the First Amendment.